

SACRAMENTO AREA CAREER WOMENS NETWORK, INC.

VOL. 7, NO. 1

JANUARY, 1991

AUTHOR, FEMME, AND STAND-UP SEX THERAPIST JO ANN LOULAN

PRESENTS HER NEW BOOK:

“THE LESBIAN EROTIC DANCE”

WHEN: FRIDAY, JANUARY 18, 1991

6:30 p.m. Registration

8:00 p.m. Program

WHERE: HOLIDAY INN NORTHEAST,
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Celebrated author, feminist and therapist JoAnn Loulan does it again with her newest book on lesbian eroticism and sexuality, “The Lesbian Erotic Dance: Butch, Femme, Androgyny and Other Rhythms.” If you’ve never had the opportunity to see her, you’re in for the evening of your life! Get ready for an evening of excitement, laughter, witty profundities, and those oh-so-sensual double entendres as she takes us kicking and screaming into an honest and revealing look at the underlying essence of lesbian relationships.

JoAnn is a licensed counselor and sex therapist with a private practice (98 percent of whom are lesbian) in northern California. She is well-known in our community for her two previous books, “Lesbian Sex” and “Lesbian Passion: Loving Ourselves and Each Other.” An advocate of Twelve Step Programs, JoAnn frequently speaks to groups of people in recovery about the impact recovery has on sex and intimacy.

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Lioness Books will be offering JoAnn’s new book “The Lesbian Erotic Dance” for sale at a 10 percent discount to SACWN members at the event.

Editorial

SPEAK/OUT AND WHAT VALUES GUIDE THEIR ACTIONS?

Speak/Out will no longer be a regularly appearing editorial in the Newsletter.

When I became Newsletter Coordinator in December 1989, I wrote a letter to the subscribership discussing my goals to expand the scope and content of the newsletter. My hope was to bring about not only a change in the way the newsletter was used to communicate with the subscribership, but a change in the way the subscribership communicated with the Steering Committee (SC). I felt that by encouraging subscriber participation through editorials, articles, and letters the newsletter could become a tool for discussion and much needed change within the organization. I believe that to some extent these goals have been achieved.

As Newsletter Coordinator I sought to articulate these goals by giving what I felt was value to the newsletter. There are few things I value more than creativity and freedom of expression, whether that be freedom of the press or freedom to experience a thing and evaluate it on its own merits. Freedom of expression always seems to be tethered by criticism, whether constructive or obstructive. If it is to be at all valuable, criticism requires the responsibility of the individual to judge a thing on its own merits, regardless of the political standards of the status quo.

Certainly not everything deserves the criticism it receives. Take the newsletter for example. No one much cared about it before the editorials appeared. Sure, it provided information on next month's program and maybe a report or two from the SC, but it contained very little copy on local political issues and no articles critical of SACWN's values or policies. And what are SACWN's values? Does it value participating in the politics of the lesbian and gay community? Does it value honesty and integrity in meeting the diverse needs of its membership? Does it value empowering the organization and its members by coming out as the lesbian organization all of Sacramento knows it to be?

Each member of SACWN should understand that values are the driving force of any organization. Without them, an organization has no goals or direction. Since I've been a member of this organization I have raised questions about SACWN's values. As a member of the SC, I've raised these questions at meetings, as have other SC members, without any corporate action (or very little sympathetic response) occurring. Questioning the traditional role of SACWN and its corporate structure was seen as traitorous behavior, particularly when these issues were aired in the newsletter. Discussing what was perceived as "controversial issues" in the newsletter was seen by some on the SC as a reason to limit the purview of the Newsletter Committee by ignoring SC resolutions granting editorial control and fiscal responsibility to said committee.

The newsletter has gone through many changes (not to mention two editors) within the past year. One of the most insidious and outrageous changes has been the tug-of-war (read boundary and control issues) between certain members of the SC and the Newsletter Committee. According to the SACWN Constitution, Policies, and Committee Descriptions, the Newsletter Committee is empowered to "develop and implement policies regarding articles, advertising, announcements, use of subscriber names and so forth in the SACWN Newsletter."

The autonomy and purview of the Newsletter Committee seems crystal clear to me. Given SACWN's fiscal problems, the

issue of who should make editorial as well as fiscal decisions is especially true. Since May, 1990, the joint efforts of the Marketing/Advertising Coordinator and myself have resulted in increased newsletter advertising revenues and a reduction of the production and mailing costs of the newsletter by 50 percent. A report to the SC on these changes was submitted on October 1, 1990. The findings of this report have not been summarily recognized in the official minutes of that meeting, nor have they been acknowledged by some members of the SC. This lack of recognition is exemplified by their attempts to prohibit the December Newsletter from being published under the guise of "keeping newsletter costs down."

Does the uproar over the editorials in the newsletter merit the attention it has received? That is a subjective question, answered by one's enjoyment or irritation of the content. However, there was little acknowledgement by the SC that SACWN members were thinking about and discussing the merits of issues raised in the newsletter. There was also very little discussion about the value of editorials as a tool for participation among all members. Instead, the attempts by some on the SC to control the focus and content of the newsletter have degenerated into a self-serving power struggle. Avoidance of the real issues from certain members of the SC does nothing to reconcile the dissidence, frustrations, and tensions between those who believe SACWN can expand its political and corporate agenda and those who feel threatened by what they see as a loss of control (read elitism, homophobia, and loss of tradition).

There have been many women on the SC who have brought fresh ideas to SACWN and there are those women on the SC who impede the growth process and have been there too long (I am not implying that length of tenure is equal to retrogressive thinking and policy decisions). For the sake of SACWN's political and philosophical growth, let's hope they know who they are.

It's hard to give up working on the newsletter and I will miss it. I have learned a lot about writing, editing, and receiving constructive criticism from co-workers. I have nothing but praise and admiration for the writing talents, production skills, and professionalism of the newsletter staff. I believe we have all made a positive change in the newsletter and in SACWN itself.

If, in a volunteer organization, I cannot have some degree of autonomy and creative expression, then I do not wish to participate. If I can no longer adhere to my personal values and maintain my integrity, then I do not wish to be a member of the SC or endorse SACWN through my participation, contribution, and creative efforts.

Amanda Stennick
Newsletter Coordinator and Editor

NEWSLETTER STAFF

COORDINATOR, EDITOR AMANDA STENNICK
CONTRIBUTORS SANDRA WARNE, REMY CECI, MARY SMITH
ADVERTISING REMY CECI
TYPESETTING/LAYOUT PAULA KREGEL,
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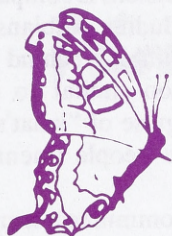
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COMING UP!

- February 23 Annual Sweetheart Dance, this time with a live band, the Heartbeats! Dance the night away in the grand hall of the Unitarian Church.
- March 15 That classic Lesbian comedian Robin Tyler will have you rolling in the aisles all evening with her unique style of humor. Don't miss her new act.

Vacancies on SACWN Steering Committee

There are currently five vacancies on the SACWN Steering Committee. The positions of Finance Coordinator, Marketing/Advertising Coordinator, Newsletter Coordinator, Special Events Coordinator, and Volunteer Coordinator are vacant and need strong, energetic women to assume the responsibilities of these positions. If you are interested in serving SACWN by being a Coordinator on the Steering Committee, please contact Steering Committee Coordinator Rosanna Herber, 451-1682.

National Lesbian Conference

ATTENTION LESBIANS! The National Lesbian Conference is calling on the entire lesbian community to insure diversity and representation of all lesbians. We are ready, willing and able to accomplish this. We invite you to participate. Are you ready? The first National Lesbian Conference will be held April 24-28, 1991, in Atlanta, Georgia. Over 5,000 lesbians are expected to participate in this gathering. The participation of Lesbians of Color, Lesbians with Disabilities and Old Lesbians is especially encouraged. The conference will include over 400 workshops, caucuses and panel discussions.

What if 5,000 lesbians of all shapes, sizes, colors and abilities were to come together from around the country? And what if they listened to each other? And learned from each other? And what if, after four days of listening and learning, they returned to their homes all over the country with a new respect and understanding of how magnificently diverse a community we are?

The conference needs your participation in the form of time, talent, energy and donations (if every lesbian in the nation donated \$1.00 to this project, annual conferences could be funded for the next three years!) Please send donations or requests for more information on how to participate to National Lesbian Conference, P.O. Box 1999, Decatur, GA 30031, or call them at (404) 373-0000.

Info. from the National Lesbian Conference brochure

Letters to the Editor

Editor:

When I joined the SACWN Steering Committee, first as Programs Associate then as Marketing/Advertising Coordinator, my motives were simple: to help SACWN grow and be all it could be to Sacramento area lesbians. As Programs Associate, I wanted to help bring interesting, informative, and perhaps unusual programs to SACWN members. As Marketing/Advertising Coordinator, I wanted to promote not only SACWN events, but SACWN itself, both within the SACWN membership and among the greater lesbian and gay community, and possibly through reaching out into mainstream society, help promote a positive image of lesbians we could all be proud of.

I knew SACWN had its problems, but being an optimist, I was excited by the possibilities of working within one of northern California's largest lesbian organizations. I felt SACWN had an "image" problem in terms of how the organization was perceived by its own members, as well as the larger lesbian and gay community, the gay press, and the general media.

I now realize SACWN's problems are more than image deep. No amount of clever marketing, advertising, or public relations was going to cure problems that go to the core of how an organization is governed and the basic principles under which it operates. I have resigned from the SACWN Steering Committee in total frustration, frustration at the Steering Committee's refusal to accept the need for major change, frustration at the lawlessness of Steering Committee meetings and the endless power struggles and efforts to thwart creativity or innovation.

This is not to say I haven't enjoyed many of my responsibilities and the close associations with some of the women who run SACWN. Working closely with the Newsletter Coordinator, we managed to make the newsletter more vital, more readable, and more profitable. We cut production costs in half, rearranged layout to a more professional look, and increased advertising revenues without increasing advertising costs. Within a few months, we turned the newsletter from a financial drain for SACWN to one that is totally self-supporting.

Working on advertising for the monthly programs has been great. I particularly enjoyed working with our gay press to promote SACWN events. Joanna, Susan, and Jane all deserve a hand for providing us with an entertaining and safe alternative to the bar scene, sometimes under difficult financial and logistic constraints.

However, over the last months, it has become increasingly clear that I could no longer support the Steering Committee and particularly the Executive Committee in decisions which directly affect how SACWN is governed and the identity and direction of the organization. I simply cannot support an organization that:

- is run as an oligarchy while hiding under the guise of a democracy, with decisions made by a few individuals outside regular Steering Committee meetings;

- promotes conformity and silence through co-opting ideas and by making it difficult to raise issues or implement change;
- cannot adhere to a consistent corporate structure for decision-making;
- has no clear idea how to govern itself, allowing lawlessness in meetings and knee-jerk policy decisions without regard to their long-term effects on the organization;
- uses the shield of "member confidentiality" to hide its own homophobia and lack of commitment to the greater community.

I am aware that most SACWN members don't care how SACWN is governed, as long as there is a monthly program to attend. But for those of you who DO care, and who want to see SACWN as a vital, cohesive, powerful voice in the community, I urge you to start asking some hard questions of your organization's leaders.

Remy Ceci

Marketing/Advertising Coordinator

Editor:

The SACWN Executive Committee moved all of its members one step closer to becoming just like the discriminatory all-men's clubs in November by restricting the "Holiday Celebration" to "Members Only."

Unfortunately, SACWN seems more and more to have adopted the time-honored conservative old boys' method of promoting itself by relegating everyone else to "less than" status.

Adding insult to injury, and reminiscent of scantily-clad sirens emerging from cakes to entertain the male masses, SACWN attained the height of hypocrisy by securing the Sacramento *Men's* Chorus to perform at this lesbian only event.

What is wrong with this picture?

SACWN this year has staged at least two events with universal appeal to women and men — the Roberta Achtenberg fundraiser and now the "Holiday Celebration." Yet attendance was restricted at both events — first to "Women Only" and now to "Members Only."

These kinds of inconsistent decisions restrict the organization's potential for generating apparently-needed funds (according to the stated need for increasing membership dues by 50%) AND its potential for helping unify people of an already discriminated against group of people — lesbians and gay men.

The thinking behind these kinds of decisions is comparable to inviting k.d. lang to sing and excluding lesbians and people who wear western attire. The thinking behind these decisions also is terrifying, and all-too similar to other decisions made historically under the guise of "what's best for people (members)" and "what the people (members) want."

Some of the fruits of the Executive Committee's struggles are apparent: decreasing membership, as more and more

Continued on next page

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Letters

Continued from previous page

former members decline to rejoin the organization; escalating dues and fees for events, even though food often is sparse and music at the dances often is undanceable except for the very young and very hip; and the November departure of half of the Committee's officers, including the Newsletter Coordinator who has printed thoughtful, questioning editorials often to the dismay of some of the Steering Committee members.

1990 has been a difficult year for SACWN's leaders and followers. 1991 offers hope for fresh perspectives and solutions, and each of us has a responsibility to help assure that SACWN's next surprise is not the announcement of an event for "White Childless Members Only."

Judy Ludwick

GLAAD Reorganizes, Seeks Members

Would you like to monitor one or more of the local publications or TV/radio stations for homophobic or bigoted statements about lesbians and gays? Would you like to be involved in helping to sensitize and educate representatives of the local press about violence and discrimination which is provoked by discrimination?

The Sacramento Chapter of GLAAD, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, is reorganizing and needs women and men to work with Sacramento's more than 30 radio stations, seven TV stations and multitude of newspapers to promote positive and accurate expressions of lesbians and gays.

A reorganizational meeting is set for 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 10, 1991, at The Commons, 17th and P streets to discuss goal setting and membership building.

Sacramento GLAAD, founded in April as only the third chapter in California, is being coordinated by Interim Acting Co-Chairs Judy Ludwick and Bill Heffner until the membership has been expanded so election of officers can take place early in 1991.

"Our goal is to have 25 to 30 people attend January's meeting, so we can begin to build a dynamic, active membership to keep track of the local press and be prepared to respond quickly and consistently to anti-lesbian and gay remarks," Ludwick noted. "We hope to interest enough people so we can elect officers in February."

GLAAD also will form an Advisory Board of community representatives who are knowledgeable about the history of the lesbian/gay community and the community's interactions with the local press. The Advisory Board will assist GLAAD members in understanding how to deal most effectively with the press.

For more information about how you can become involved in GLAAD, contact Ludwick at 429-2806 or Heffner at 451-0919.

A Message From The Steering Committee

In December the SACWN Board began work with a Business Consultant to help the organization function more effectively. One result is a new mission statement with a vision for SACWN's future. It states: "SACWN is a thriving, growing, Lesbian organization; well-known for providing and maintaining a nurturing, open and empowering environment in the community that affirms the Lesbian/Gay lifestyle with an opportunity for personal and career development through education and social networking opportunities."

The SACWN Board is now analyzing the tasks that need to be completed to help the organization accomplish this vision. We will have a meeting in January to plan how we can find the best people to help us with the work to support this new vision. If you are interested in contributing, please call me.

The SACWN Board wishes to thank those Board members who resigned last month for all the good work they did to help SACWN grow and change in the past year. The current SACWN Board looks forward to 1991 with great anticipation and we hope your new year is filled with new opportunities for growth and prosperity also.

Rosanna Herber
Steering Committee Coordinator

Speakers Bureau Wants YOU

Women interested in being a part of the community Speakers Bureau being organized by the River City Democratic Club and the Lambda Community Fund are invited to attend a meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 15, 1991, at the Lambda Center, 1931 L Street.

The Speakers Bureau, which has 24 women and men who have completed training to make presentations both within the lesbian/gay community and the non-gay community, has been in demand at Sacramento City College, CSU Sacramento, and U.C. Davis.

"We're particularly pleased with a 30-week series of one-hour presentations scheduled with the deputies from the County Sheriff's Department," noted Marghe Covino, River City Democratic Club (RCDC) Community Liaison Co-Chair who has organized the Speakers Bureau with Co-Chair Judy Ludwick. Also upcoming is a presentation to rookies from the City Police Department.

The goals of the group are 1) to identify and train speakers to address the concerns of lesbians and gays in public forums and classrooms; 2) to provide more sensitivity training to law enforcement personnel, and improve relationships between law enforcement personnel and the lesbian/gay community; 3) to foster greater understanding between the lesbian/gay and non-gay communities; and 4) to promote understanding of female/male dynamics within the lesbian/gay community.

For more information about the Speakers Bureau, contact Ludwick at 429-2806 or Covino at 371-3848.

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November Holiday Program Success!

By Mary Smith, Newsletter Staff

Our November Holiday program for SACWN members had something for everyone. The Sacramento Women's Chorus opened up the entertainment singing better than ever. This group has shown a great deal of improvement over the last year. We look forward to seeing them again at future SACWN events. The Sacramento Men's Chorus gave us an exciting variety of entertainment, including their renditions of '50s pop tunes and a "masochism shuffle" that was hilarious.

By far the most important guest for the evening was Mayor Anne Rudin, who spoke to an attentive audience regarding her own personal history and career development, interspersed with a little advice for those of us who have not yet reached the pinnacle of our achievements (I think that about covers all of us . . . yes?).

Ms. Rudin's earliest concerns regarding her career were earning a living and being independent. It never occurred to her to work in a traditionally male occupation. She became a nurse and aspired to be superintendent of nurses. Obviously, the leadership skills and talent she possessed would not be limited to a hospital. When new districts formed in Sacramento and seats on the City Council opened up, Ms. Rudin grabbed the opportunity. She said she got elected because others felt she didn't have a "women's libber" attitude. (Fooled them, didn't she?!)

Ms. Rudin advised us to know where we want to go in order to get there and not to let society tell us what we want to be. SACWN can be an excellent vehicle for lesbians in that vein. She also suggested we redefine leadership from a female perspective where competition is not paramount. "Consensus is more important than leadership," she stated, and continued with a reminder that, "power is the ability to get things done."

Ms. Rudin believes that persistence is a big part of what looks like courage. When asked about her support for lesbian/gay rights, she replied that gay rights laws would not have passed without the belief that these are civil rights issues. When asked whether or not SACWN should be more "out" and visible, she responded that SACWN could have an impact as an out organization, but that we have to be comfortable with it. "What we do is less important than what we are," she said.

As an additional surprise, Mayor Rudin announced (for the first time anywhere) that she will run again in 1991. We wish her the best of luck and all of our support as well as thanks for her participation in our program. (Thanks, also, to Rosanna Herber, SACWN Steering Committee Coordinator, whose introduction of the Mayor provided us all with more interesting information about her than most of us knew or that Ms. Rudin would tell.)

The evening was capped by dancing and music, supplied by Sierra Inn's own Rusty Dusty (we'll certainly look for her again).

Altogether, it was a great program and a wonderful way to kick-off the holiday season. Special thanks to Joanna Cassese, SACWN Program Coordinator, for another successful event.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Happy New Year, to all of you S.I.G. members! Our facilitators of the month are Chris and Shelley of Davis Over 30. This is one of the fastest growing Special Interest Groups we have, thanks to our energetic facilitators. As you notice, Chris and Shelley have come up with creative blurbs for the column, and interesting ideas for events, such as the Chinese potluck this month. We appreciate your hard work in activating this group, Chris and Shelley.

In the next few months, we will be featuring a sampling of your ideas for new S.I.G.S from our last survey. This month's suggestions: a play-reading group, a computer group, an armchair travel group, a music group, a writer's group, and a **softball team**. Any takers? Call me, 967-0611 and leave your name and the group you're interested in, as well as if you'd be interested in coordinating the group.

We have interest expressed in a **COUPLES** group and a group for women in the **MILITARY** or Women who can't be out at work, but we need more names.

Ellie Zacks
S.I.G. Coordinator
967-0611

Kathy Mullen
Associate

BRIDGE

Regular games will be on January 11 at Ellie's and January 25 at Kathy Mullen's — 7:00 p.m. Bridge lesson — January 4 and February 1. Call Joyce, 1-676-4317 for more info.

SINGLES

Cheryl, 452-1687.

SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN

Lill Ordaz gave us an interesting overview of investment ideas in November. January 22, Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. is our next meeting. It's at a different location, so be sure to call Ellie (interim facilitator) for details, 967-0611.

BOOK GROUP

Hey! The Book Group is doing something different this month. We're discussing readings on S/M. Book Group meets the third Sunday of each month. We'd like to have you join us. For more info., call Gretchen, 922-6287.

LATE-BLOOMERS

A New Year, a new you! Join other Late Bloomers (women recently "out") who may share much in common with you. We'll be discussing ways to meet other women and may be doing some role play. Practice new social skills in a friendly environment, January 17, 7:30 p.m. Call Mary, 1-677-8901.

RELATIONSHIP ADDICTION

One definition of relationship addiction is, "In spite of ample evidence that something isn't good for us, we can't stop our involvement with it." (Robin Norwood). Does that fit you? We are a small group who have these things in common. We offer support and a safe place as well as 12-step study for relationship addiction. We do discourage partners from participating in the group. Call Judie, 481-5001.

CULTURE CLUB

Ann, 927-6038.

TOP TEN

This group welcomes women over 50 and those who appreciate mature women. The December meeting was an enjoyable holiday brunch. To chase away the January doldrums, we are having a "Pleasure Party," January 13. Call Ariel, 483-9794 for info.

DAVIS OVER 30 GROUP

One thing Davis has plenty of (in addition to all things right and relevant) is Chinese restaurants. So . . . on your way to our January gathering, stop off at your favorite one, and pick up a white box full of an intriguing entree and we will end up with a Chinese banquet! Come share in the pleasures of good food and good company, Saturday night, Jan. 19 from 7-10 p.m. Also, for those Davisites who love football, we are planning a fun-filled Super Bowl party on SuperBowl Sunday. For details and locations on both events, call Chris, 758-0879 or Shelley, 753-0470. See you there.

SCUBA DIVERS

753-1918.

MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS GROUP

This group is being discontinued at this time due to lack of interest.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Carol, 451-7933

NEW GROUP!!

HORSING AROUND

The newly formed "Horsing Around" Group is kicking around some ideas for spring rides and further functions while we're waiting for our horse lovers to input some ideas. Call Snowy for more info., 272-2095.

Maya Angelou to Speak

World-renowned poet, author and lyricist Maya Angelou will speak at the Sacramento Community Center Theater Tuesday, January 22, 1991. Tickets are \$11-\$23 and are available from the Community Center Box Office (449-5181) or Bass tickets (923-BASS). The proceeds will benefit public television station KVIE Channel 6.

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Town Council Report

November, 1990

By Mary Smith, Newsletter Staff

The Sacramento Lesbian and Gay Town Council met on November 27th at the Lambda Community Center. The key item of interest was the reintroduction of a motion by ACT UP to form a Town Council Committee to act as a liaison with Sacramento law enforcement regarding issues relevant to the community. The motion passed.

Anyone from the member organizations may volunteer to be on the police liaison committee. Those desiring to volunteer may contact Lou Camera at 689-3318. Five people will be selected to serve. Screening criteria will be determined by the Executive Committee when it has an opportunity to meet before the next meeting. The Town Council Executive Committee will strive to select people from a cross-section of the lesbian and gay community, including women, men, persons of color, persons living with AIDS or HIV, and the physically challenged.

The town Council took a final vote and accepted into the bylaws the language allowing the body to be action-oriented whenever a majority deems it appropriate. (This motion was addressed in the last SACWN newsletter.)

A motion was introduced by Lambda Letters suggesting that the Town Council support an action against Safeway stores as a response to Safeway's continued advertising in the Sacramento Union and non-responsiveness to our community with respect to such advertising and support of the homophobic newspaper. For more information, contact Boyce Hinman at 965-6851.

A number of announcements were made at the meeting, noted as follows:

- A group known as Queer Nation is looking to establish a chapter in Sacramento. Queer Nation's purpose is to publicize lesbian and gay issues and to make a statement of being "out." Actions of the group in the past have been dancing in straight bars and going as an "out" group to Ghirardelli's in San Francisco for ice cream. This group is a kind of ACT UP for lesbian/gay rights in general. (ACT UP, in comparison, focuses on AIDS-related issues.) For information, contact Everett Denman at 696-3318.

- A roast for out-going Governor Deukmejian is in the planning stages. For information, contact Marghe Covino at 371-3848.

- Support for lesbian/gay teens is vitally needed in Sacramento. We currently have a teen rap group that meets at the Lambda Community Center, but additional support is needed. Specific issues include shelter, counseling, foster parents, and advocacy. Call the Lambda Community Center at 442-0185.

If you would like additional information regarding the November Town Council meeting, please contact Rosanna Herber at 451-1682, or Mary Smith at 395-0428.



Emotions and Your Health A Balancing Act . . .

by Sandra Warne, M.A.

Addiction — A Problem of Imbalance

From my own experience I know that addiction is an imbalance of the body and the mind. It's the result of losing touch with ourselves, or reaching outside for stimulation and satisfaction because we no longer find gratification from within. Ego runs us; self is denied. Addicts are egomaniacs with inferiority complexes; relying on external stimulation to medicate the soul.

I am not just referring to our "hard addictions" but also all of those "minor" obsessions that can become major hurdles in our pursuit of happiness. Workaholism. Perfectionism. Procrastination. Sugar, coffee, and cigarette addictions. And addictions to unhealthy relationships. Workaholics typically suffer from anxiety reactions and heart, circulation, and stomach ailments. Perfectionists and procrastinators the same. And we all know the long-term consequences of cigarette smoking.

Certainly eliminating the addictive element, particularly if it's chemical, is the first step. But it is only a prerequisite to treatment. And in my mind, the addictive food, drug or situation — while it contributes to the problem — is never the cause of it.

The study of dual addictions suggests that there is more involved here than a bad habit gone overboard. Think about the workaholic who chain smokes, the perfectionist who consumes coffee by the potful and the person who clings neurotically to a one-sided relationship and relies on tranquilizers to cope.

The trouble is we are living in a society that stresses outside stimulation. We set up dissatisfaction with ourselves all the time. We go by what society says is the right way to be gratified. Very often society's expectations run paradoxically counter to our well being and "true" self. Sexual preference expectations are but one example. To counter this we must tune out external expectations and reconnect with ourselves, or for many of us, reconnect or connect for the first time, with a power higher than ourselves.

The outcome is the same. We begin to tune into our feelings. We do not "reform" — or reject who we are, but instead we "transform" and accept who we are and thus operate on a higher octave. Most people who have addiction — are hurting and suffering from low self-esteem — they know only the voice of their unbalanced side. To know freedom from addiction is to know true empowerment. It's to understand, feel and be able to give to others from a relaxed and central core. For me that core is spiritual. The feeling experience can be a painful one but it is always positive. A revelation that can release us from the slavery of addiction.



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WHITTIER HOUSE B & B assures you a comfortable and relaxing sojourn, a special place for a special time. Info: LSAVE 12133 Colima, Whittier, CA. 90604, 213/941-7222. Near Disneyland and central to L.A., Long Beach, Orange County areas. Cable TV & women films, limo service.

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TAHOE MIDWEEK SKI PACKAGE AT HOLLY'S. 5 nites lodging, all delicious and healthy meals, cross country ski lessons, discount ski rentals, transportation to ski areas, plus lots of evening fun! Only \$220 singles, \$350 couples. Details and reservations, (916) 544-7040.

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HOUSEMATE WANTED to share 3-bedroom, 2-bath house near City College with professional woman. No smoking or drugs. \$300/month. 452-5503.

State Commission Seeks Input

The California State Commission on the Status of Women is soliciting information about how local CSWs and other women's organizations will be celebrating Women's History Month 1991. They will highlight activities within each county in a Schedule of Events section of their February newsletter, "California Women." Your cooperation in providing this information will let others around California learn about your work, and will give them even more ideas about programs they might want to try, too. The commission needs your response no later than Jan. 10, 1991. Their address is 1303 J Street, Suite 400, Sacramento, 95814-2900.

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Joan Frázzini,
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